



Chair's Chatter

I was going to tell you all about my new lathe this month. It was a 50th birthday present in April, but I am still yet to turn anything on it. It is a small Nova lathe ... the Nova Comet II to be precise, and it is set to replace my old Axminster lathe that I use for talks, demonstrations and shows. However, as I've been too ill to do much at all recently, I thought I'd save my report for when I have turned a few pieces of timber on it and try and get some photos. I need to get practicing on it after all, because I will be bringing it to the club for my demonstration in July. So watch this space!

That brings me on to thoughts of absent friends at the club meetings. As you are aware, Vance recently went into hospital for major heart surgery. I am very pleased to hear that all seems to have gone well, and that he is slowly recovering at home. Hopefully he will be back at the club for the June meeting and able to see Mark Sanger putting the club lathe through its paces.

I too have been absent the last two months and have really missed our Friday nights together. Back in April I was away with the Search & Rescue team on a vital training weekend so had to miss Gary Rance. By all accounts it sounds like I missed a most excellent and entertaining demonstration. I must thank Hugh for writing up such an outstanding and detailed report in last month's newsletter. It really is a privilege to be able to read about missed nights and see the projects that were produced. It also means I can have a go at the salt shaker myself!

Back to my absenteeism. It was the weekend of the training course that I fell ill. I woke on the Sunday morning feeling very poorly indeed and was sent home early, thinking that it was just a nasty stomach bug or food poisoning. To cut a long story short, it turned out to be a very nasty infection indeed requiring treatment in hospital. I have been backwards and forwards for blood tests and all sorts ever since then, and am still suffering five weeks later. Thankfully a second course of very strong antibiotics seems to have killed off the infection and I am starting to see the light at the end of a very dark tunnel.

And now for the elephant in the room, which is the simple fact that our club is struggling to survive at the moment. All club members should, by now, have received a personal letter from me explaining our current predicament. We no longer have an acting Treasurer or Events Secretary. This means two things. Firstly, the club cannot legally continue without a Treasurer. Also, no-one is currently booking demonstrators for 2018. These are probably the two most vital roles that are required to keep the club up and running and yet it appears that no-one is available to help. My appeal letter is a last ditch attempt to secure some volunteers in the hope of saving the club. Failing that, we will be forced to call an EGM to discuss the future of the club and where we go from here. I sincerely hope that it will not come to that.

This takes me nicely back to absent friends. The club has slowly seen its numbers dwindle over the last few years with the loss of some very dear friends. Gordon Fradley, John Smith, Terry Gray and Peter Worrall were all key members who actively volunteered for committee roles in the past and helped to make the club the success that it has been to date. I have very fond memories of them all and have been thinking about them a lot the last few days. When I joined the club about 10 years ago, we had 50 members, but this has slowly fallen to just 28 in 2017. Sadly we are all getting older, and many club members have been lost to serious illness or have passed away.



It appears that other clubs have a similar predicament with not enough “youngsters” taking up woodturning and joining their local clubs. I know that the AWGB are actively trying to promote the craft and inspire youngsters with their free training programmes. Hopefully some of this PR will save some of our other struggling clubs as well as our own. So if you are one of the many people out there that read our monthly newsletters and are thinking of joining our club, then now is a time that we need you more than ever before.

Well! It's all been a bit doom and gloom for my chatter this month and certainly not easy to write. I sincerely hope that next month will it be better news and more upbeat. Until then, please do think long and hard and see if you have any ideas or can offer any assistance to try and save our wonderful woodturning club.



Dawn Hopley

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Editors Scriblings

Well, the feedback I have so far received about the new layout for the Newsletter is 100% favourable! That would be more encouraging if more than two members had responded, so assuming that “no news is good news”, I'll carry on! A more modest issue this month with no demonstrator to report on, and only one outside event that I attended.

I was unable to attend the May hands-on and open evening, thank you to Jane Russell for providing the write up and to Philip Watts for photographs of the competition entries.

I've been doing some more experimenting recently, combining making bowls which are part spherical (which enables some interesting turned features to be added) and also with the use of softwood and acrylic gesso to achieve very high levels of coloured and metallic lacquer finishes. Hopefully these will be on display at the June



meeting. The designs for the bowls were inspired by those of Australian turner Pat Johnson who featured in the April 2017 issue of Woodturning magazine.

Dawn has already commented on the doubts surrounding the future of the Club and you should all by now have received her plea for help. From a personal viewpoint I would be very disappointed if we have to wind things up. Being a member of Mid Staffs Woodturning Association has given me much pleasure over the last 6 years or so, 5 of them as a committee member. Being on the committee has not been an onerous task and has given me an insight into the workings of the club, and an opportunity to influence how it is run and what we provide. That in turn has increased my satisfaction of being a member. I don't doubt that we have members well capable of fulfilling any of the committee positions so I do urge you to seriously consider if you can spare the time to offer your services. The club can survive and hopefully thrive, but it needs your help to do so.

Hugh Field

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Have you heard the one about the two turners?

One was blind, the other only had one complete arm



Well, you would have if you went to Turners retreat on Saturday 22nd April. I had briefly researched Roger Foden but did not discover that he had lost most of his right arm in a farming accident 38 years ago - but that did not stop him subsequently becoming a professional woodturner, tutor and demonstrator. He does have a prosthetic arm, but does not wear it when he's turning. I was amazed



to observe the degree of control he has by either tucking the tool handle under his right shoulder, or supporting it with the end of his stump. Obviously he has had to develop a different technique to a two handed person - most of the control



is with his left hand - but having got used to the often awkward looking stance, one becomes very aware that Roger is only slightly hampered by his disability and there is little that he can't do, except perhaps lift heavy pieces. Operating the tailstock, mounting work in the chuck and tightening it were no problem. Indeed he commented that one of the most challenging projects when he started making



David Springett's Chinese Balls was the marking out; "How do you hold a ball and use a pair of compasses with only one hand?" he asked!



Roger performed three demonstrations during the day. The first was an egg shaped box. It was an inspiration and the highlight of my day, to see him do the final parting off with the skew chisel gripped only under his right shoulder and with his left hand round the back to catch the egg. Unfortunately I was unable to take photographs of Roger "in action" for this



demonstration. One of the tools that Roger favours is the "skewchigouge". For those unfamiliar with this tool, it is a bit like a gouge without a flute; very versatile and can be used as a gouge or a shear scraper. Roger uses a longer, more pointed, grind than that they are supplied with. Contrary to what one might expect, the tool produces true shavings rather than scrapings. It was surprising how much work he was able to perform without re-grinding. For his second demonstration He turned a heart shaped bowl in yew. The final demonstration was turning a goblet, but I didn't stay to watch the entire demonstration.



The blind turner, Chris Fisher, was equally inspiring. Chris lost his sight in 2008 over a period of only 4 weeks as a result of Toxoplasmosis and is now completely blind. It was after a period of rehabilitation that he took up woodturning and now teaches the craft as well as demonstrating. Even having watched him work for quite a while I still can't understand how he manages to produce such a high standard of work. He seemed to





know where everything was on his work table, even though he couldn't see them. I often struggle to find things even with good vision!

This link will take you to a series of YouTube videos which will tell you far more than my humble words and pictures can.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yE0rcUdJ_08

Hugh Field

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May Competition

This month's competition, for an abstract, was in the Challenge series. There were four entries, placed as follows:-



First - Geoff Payne



Second - Hugh Field



Third - Philip Watts



Fourth - Jane Russell

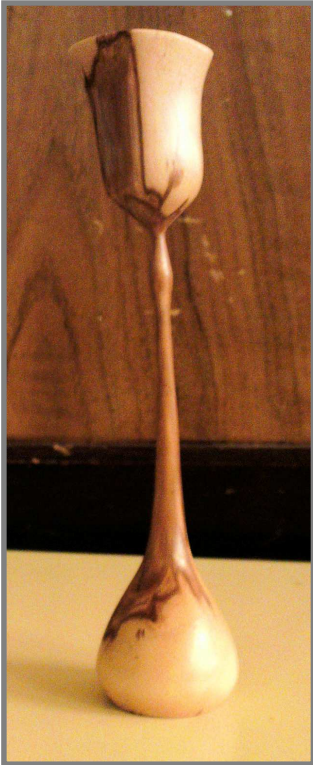


May Hands-on evening

Friday was rather a quiet night out for the club, as in spite of some welcome visitors, attendance was very low. Sadly some committee members were absent for reasons of illness, but where were all the rest of us? Still, those that did come had a very enjoyable evening.

We were joined by two members from Derwent club. Former MSWA member Paul Bellamy, now secretary at Derwent club, was there with an assortment of sharpening systems, and discussed their advantages and drawbacks with an interested group of people, while David Winter brought his prepared wood blanks and did a brisk trade.

Philip had intended to demonstrate the turning of a miniature birdhouse, the subject of next month's novice competition, but only got as far as mounting and truing the blank – he was drawn into conversation and spent a pleasant evening chatting - a perfectly valid activity for an evening of this sort! Ted, however, almost completely finished his turning of a small, thin goblet in wood from his own apple tree. The finished goblet had a flower-like cup, a slender stem, and a foot which gave the whole thing the impression of a wild tulip growing out of a bulb – a beautiful turning.



The competition, an Abstract piece, provided further interest and inspiration, as did the display table, with items supplied by Ted and others.

Meanwhile, David Neale and David Dawes kept the kettle boiling and the tea flowing throughout the evening – our thanks go to them.

Jane Russell

Forthcoming events

Club Meetings

2nd June

Mark Sanger

Lidded Hollow form

7th July

Dawn Hopley

Weaving and woodturning and/or possibly an E.G.M.

Club Competitions

June - Novice

A miniature bird-house

July - Challenge

A plant stand

Other events

Saturday 3rd & Sunday 4th June 10am - 4pm

Open Days at the Toolpost

Didcott OX11 7HR



Professional demonstrators Jan Hovens, Ronald Kanne & Les Thorne will be there along with Bert Butterfield (pyrography) and Simon Clements (wood carving and sculpture). Also representatives of key suppliers. Free event including refreshments.

These events are always excellent and an opportunity to browse Toolpost's extensive range of products and turning blanks. Well worth going!

Saturday 15th & Sunday 16th July **UK & Ireland Woodturning Symposium** Hilton Hotel, Coventry CV2 2ST

This is a large, friendly event centred solely around woodturning. The 2016 was very successful and this year promises to be even better. There will be at least 5 public demonstrators and Masterclasses from professional demonstrators. Many trade stands will be

there. This is an advance booking event. go to <http://www.ukiws.co.uk/> for more information and booking.

Saturday 22nd July **Kings Bromley Show**

MSWA is planning to have a stand again this year. Further details to follow.

Saturday 16th & Sunday 17th September **European Woodworking Show**

Cressing Temple Barns, Braintree, Essex, CM77 8PD

Over 100 exhibitors representing a diverse range of woodworking disciplines. A long way to travel but well worth it, and the location is wonderful.

Go to <http://www.ews2017.com/> for more information.

Hints and tips

This section is for any tips or advice you would like to pass on to other members. If you have discovered something you found useful that you think may benefit others, please pass it on.

Members sales items

This section is for listing any turning or woodworking tools or related items you have for sale.

Any submissions to editor@mswa.co.uk, please.

DVDs

The club has a selection of Woodturning DVD's for use by registered club members use only. You can borrow them for just £2 per month (some are free)! If any members have DVDs which are not on the list, but which they would like to donate to the Club, they would be most welcome.

David Brearley has taken over the responsibility for these items and may be seen at Club Meetings.



Abrasives and other items

Mirka Abranet 70 x 125mm Sheets:

5 x Mixed Grit Pack (120, 180, 240, 400 and 500) = £2.00 per pack

Mirka Abranet 50mm Sanding Discs:

7 x Mixed Grit pack (80, 120, 180, 240, 320, 400, 600) = £1.50 per pack

Rhinogrip 50mm Sanding Discs:

7 x Mixed Grit pack (80, 120, 180, 240, 320, 400, 600) = £0.90 per pack

Flexipad Sanding Pads (for above discs):

50mm Velcro Conical Spindle Pad with 6mm shaft = £8.82 each

J-Flex Sanding Paper:

5 x 1m lengths mixed grits 120, 180, 240, 320 & 400 = £9.50 per pack

Screwdrivers:

Various sizes donated to club = £1 each

BondFix Superglue:

50g Bottle of Medium Viscosity = £3 per bottle



Club information

Your club committee for 2017 is:-

Chairman – Dawn Hopley

Tel: 07860 501 379

chairman@mswa.co.uk

Secretary – John McElroy

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Treasurer – Vacant

Assistant Treasurer - Graham Massey

treasurer@mswa.co.uk

Events Secretary – Vacant

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Newsletter editor – Hugh Field

Tel: 0121 329 2911

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Webmanager – Philip Watts

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Please use phone numbers only if absolutely necessary.